

Implementation Strategies

Glasgow Middle School, Glasgow Independent School District
Glasgow, KY

Grade(s): 6 – 8

Scenario: Computer Lab, Home Access

Purpose: Intervention, Enrichment/Gifted and Talented, Improve State Test Scores, Special Education

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 10–100%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 4.16 hours per week, 50 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Mathematics – LV 5 (with QuickTables), Middle School Math Course 2, Pre–Algebra

Brooke Bartrug, Teacher

ALEKS has taken our school to a new level with math educational programs. Our teachers love it, the students love it, and we get results. I taught ALEKS math as an elective class after its trial run at our school. I was astonished at all ALEKS was capable of reporting to me as the teacher. The students love the games, which give us the emphasis on multiplication facts we need to make our students quicker and more accurate with these facts. I am now the ALEKS math administrator at our school, and I help other teachers implement it. I recommend ALEKS to anyone I know, whether they are struggling in math or just want to give their child an opportunity to achieve to their best ability.

Scenario

What challenges did the class or school face in math prior to using ALEKS?

The school faced the challenge of pinpointing specific areas for improvement. We had general ideas, but nothing specific. We are a high-scoring school system and we did not want to flat line.

How many days per week is class time dedicated to ALEKS?

5 days per week.

What is the average length of a class period when ALEKS is used?

50 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

We began with a test run of about 30 students. The next year, we implemented an elective course for the sixth and eighth grades. This year, we have the elective course, intervention classes, and special education subscriptions.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

We let ALEKS tailor the learning with the exception of removing content that is not required by our state. Once a student passes the current level class, we do not remove any content.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

In the electives class, which lasts for nine weeks, ALEKS is used everyday for the entire class time. The students sign on and begin work. A teacher is in the lab with them to monitor and provide one-on-one help as necessary. Intervention classes use the lab for ALEKS math two days out of the week, sometimes three. The intervention teacher works with each student on problems they are struggling with. Our special education teachers pull students out to work on topics in class that they are struggling with.

How did you modify your regular teaching approach as a result of ALEKS?

We target students who are struggling in certain areas and request that they receive an ALEKS subscription.

How often are students required or encouraged to work on ALEKS at home?

They are encouraged everyday, but we do not require them to work on ALEKS at home.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

We offer parents the opportunity to try it out at our Open Houses.

Grading

Is ALEKS assigned to your students as all or part of their homework responsibilities? If so, what part of the total homework load is it?

ALEKS is not a homework requirement.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

With a 70 percent starting point, students receive 15 percent for effort (paying attention and working), and 15 percent for improvement (student must improve by three percent each day they are present).

Do you require students to make regular amounts of progress in ALEKS?

Yes, we use the Progress Since Latest Assessment Report to gauge progress. Students must progress three percent each day.

Learning Outcomes

Since using ALEKS, please describe the learning outcomes or progress you have seen.

We have seen an increase in our Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) scores. We have also seen an increase in our Explore test results. I have students that ask for another nine weeks on the program because they enjoy math using ALEKS. Our students in special education have improved their abilities at their own rate. The students love the visual pie chart that lets them see results immediately. They like the fact that once they master a topic, ALEKS acknowledges it and doesn't keep asking the same question a specific amount of times because it is programmed to.

Best Practices

Are there any best practices you would like to share with other teachers implementing ALEKS?

You must monitor your students and provide one-on-one help to those who have already tried the program's explanation. I also enjoy logging on and competing with the students on the games, which are restricted to twice a week for 20 minutes. We also reward the students with a small piece of candy for completing a slice of their pie. When they complete the whole pie, we let them choose a dollar prize, which is a great incentive.